

Message Text

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72

ORIGIN EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-10

SSO-00 /075 R

DRAFTED BY EA/PRCM:OVARMSTRONG:MFR

APPROVED BY EA/PRCM:OVARMSTRONG

----- 066229

P R 162230Z MAY 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USLO PEKING PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

UNCLAS STATE 115156

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CH, CB

SUBJECT: SEIZURE OF MAYAGUEZ

1. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM WHITE HOUSE PRESS BRIEFING
MAY 15.

2. MR. NESSEN: I THINK I TOLD THOSE WHO STAYED HERE LAST
NIGHT THAT--OR I RECALLED TO THEM THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF
THE STATE DEPARTMENT--ON MONDAY THE HEAD OF THE CHINESE
LIAISON OFFICE HERE DID GO TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT AT THE
DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST AND WAS GIVEN A MESSAGE, WHICH WAS
ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THE PUBLIC STATEMENT; THAT NO
REPLY EVER CAME FROM THE CAMBODIANS. AND THAT THE SECRETARY
GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS WAS ALSO ASKED TO USE HIS
GOOD OFFICE AND THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT HE WAS ABLE TO
HAVE ANY SUCCESS.

3. Q. DID THE CHINESE SAY THAT THEY WOULD COOPERATE IN
TRYING TO SEND THE MESSAGE AND DID THEY SAY WHETHER THEY
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HAD ANY REPLY?

MR. NESSEN: WE NEVER GOT A REPLY.

4. Q. DO WE KNOW WHETHER THE CHINESE TRANSMITTED THE MESSAGE?

MR. NESSEN: WE DON'T. I SAID THAT LAST NIGHT.

Q. WE DID NOT HEAR BACK FROM THE CHINESE, AS WELL AS THE CAMBODIANS?

MR. NESSEN: THAT IS CORRECT.

5. Q. RON, DURING THIS CRISIS WITH THE CHINESE, DID THE UNITED STATES ISSUE A 24-HOUR ULTIMATUM, OR DID WE, AT ANY TIME, DO THAT?

MR. NESSEN: NO.

6. Q. WELL, WHAT MESSAGES WERE PASSED, AND HOW?

MR. NESSEN: AS I SAY, THROUGH THE CHINESE. LET ME CONSULT WITH MY ADVISERS HERE FOR A MINUTE.

I JUST WANT TO TIDY UP ONE BIT ON THE MESSAGE THAT, AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS INDICATED EARLIER IN THE WEEK, THE CHINESE LIAISON OFFICE CHIEF DID COME OVER ON MONDAY AND RECEIVED THE MESSAGE.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS SAID THAT AND THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS YESTERDAY WERE TOLD THAT THE CHINESE TOOK THE MESSAGE AND 24 HOURS LATER BROUGHT IT BACK AND THERE WAS NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF WHETHER IT HAD BEEN OR NOT BEEN TRANSMITTED TO THE CAMBODIANS.

Q. BROUGHT IT BACK, RON?

MR. NESSEN: YES.

Q. BROUGHT THE MESSAGE BACK? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
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MR. NESSEN: I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

Q. HE BROUGHT THE SUBJECT BACK? IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?

MR. NESSEN: BROUGHT THE DOCUMENTS, OR THE PIECE OF PAPER,

BACK.

Q. THAT INDICATES THEY DID NOT SEND IT, DOESN'T IT?

MR. NESSEN: NOT NECESSARILY.

Q. WHAT DOES IT INDICATE?

Q. DID THEY SAY WHETHER THEY SENT IT, RON?

MR. NESSEN: I DON'T REALLY THINK WE CAN GO ANY FURTHER ON THIS. I HAVE TOLD YOU ABOUT ALL I CAN TELL YOU.

7. Q. RON, IT DOES NOT SEEM UNREASONABLE TO ASK YOU WHAT THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR SAID WHEN HE BROUGHT THE MESSAGE BACK.

MR. NESSEN: I THINK I HAVE PROBABLY GONE AS FAR -- PERHAPS FURTHER THAN I SHOULD -- AND I THINK THIS IS A MATTER THAT WAS HANDLED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

8. RON, AREN'T YOU CREATING A LITTLE BIT OF A MYSTERY HERE? YOU SAID ORIGINALLY, I THOUGHT, THAT WE DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER THE CHINESE HAD TRANSMITTED THIS AND FROM WHAT YOU ARE NOW SAYING I KIND OF GET THE IMPRESSION THAT WE DO KNOW, BUT FOR WHATEVER REASONS YOU HAVE, YOU ARE NOT ABLE OR WILLING TO SAY.

MR. NESSEN: I DON'T SEE HOW YOU DRAW THAT CONCLUSION, LOU. THE FACTS ARE AS I HAVE LAID THEM OUT. WHETHER IT WAS TRANSMITTED OR WHETHER IT WAS NOT TRANSMITTED, WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING.

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Q. CAN WE STATE THAT IT WAS REJECTED?

MR. NESSEN: I WOULD NOT SAY THAT IF I WERE YOU, HELEN, BECAUSE I HAVE NOT HEARD ANYTHING HERE TO INDICATE THAT IT WAS REJECTED.

Q. DOESN'T THE RETURN OF THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE INDICATE THAT IT WOULD NOT ACCEPT IT?

MR. NESSEN: WHY WOULD YOU DRAW THAT CONCLUSION? KISSINGER

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NNN

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